



MASSACHUSETTS
MANUFACTURED HOMES
COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 1, 2006 – AUGUST 31, 2007

Patricia M. MacDonald, Chair

David G. Piper, Jr., Recording Secretary

Manufactured Homes Commission

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 6, Section 108, establishes the Manufactured Homes Commission. The five-member Commission is appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Council, and must include at least one resident of a manufactured housing community and at least one community owner. Not more than three members shall be of the same political party. In 2006-2007, the Commission consisted of five members: Patricia M. MacDonald- Chair, David G. Piper, Jr.- Recording Secretary, Edward D. Currie, Sr., State Representative Susan Williams Gifford, and Scott Fiske. Additionally, State Representatives Stephen LeDuc and Christopher Donelan attend Commission meetings in central and western Massachusetts in place of Representative Gifford. The Attorney General and the Undersecretary of the Department of Housing and Community Development are ex-officio members. The Attorney General's representative to the Commission was Attorney Diane Lawton. The representative of the Undersecretary of the Department of Housing and Community Development was Attorney Timothy Solomon.

It is the mission of the Manufactured Homes Commission to provide prompt, impartial service to all parties affected by or concerned with matters pertaining to manufactured housing communities, to the maximum extent permitted by law.

In its implementation of this Mission, the Commission:

- 1) Shall identify issues pertaining to manufactured housing communities, the owners of such communities, and the owners of manufactured homes and make recommendations to deal with these issues;
- 2) May receive complaints from owners of manufactured housing communities and manufactured home owners, and if appropriate, make recommendations for their resolution;
- 3) May develop, with the Department of Housing and Community Development, proposals for specific zoning standards to be applicable to new manufactured housing communities in order to ensure that all such new communities are well designed, attractive and suited to the needs of manufactured home owners;
- 4) May formulate, with the Department of Housing and Community Development, proposals for local taxation of manufactured homes and home sites so that municipal tax revenues meet the cost of hosting a manufactured housing community; and
- 5) Shall file a report annually with the Governor, the General Court, the Attorney General, and the Department of Housing and Community Development, about the Commission's activities and recommendations, if any, with drafts of legislation required to affect such recommendations.

Commission Composition

Vacancy Filled

With the resignation of Mr. Henry Schlickman in October 2005, Mr. Scott Fiske, a community representative, was recommended to the Governor for appointment to the Commission. In October 2006, Mr. Fiske was officially appointed to the Commission.

Legislative Representation on the Commission

At the September Commission meeting, the idea of adding two more legislative representatives to the Commission was explored. Given the numerous and varying responsibilities of a legislator serving both in Boston and in the district they represent, it can often be difficult for a legislator to attend Commission meetings in the locations where they are held. While several legislators were approached by the Commissioners, State Representatives Stephen LeDuc and Christopher Donelan agreed to attend those Commission meetings that occur in western and central Massachusetts (areas that include the districts they represent).

Officer Elections

There were no elections of officers held this year. Ms. MacDonald continued in the role of the Chairperson of the Commission. Mr. David Piper, Jr. remained as the Commission's Secretary.

Dates and Location of Meetings

The following nine Commission meetings were held during the past year:

September 26, 2006 – Taunton

October 17, 2006 – Leominster

November 14, 2006 – Marlborough

January 9, 2007 – Revere

March 20, 2007 – Carver

May 15, 2007 – Williamstown

June 19, 2007 – Plymouth

July 10, 2007 – Salisbury

August 21, 2007 – Malden

An April Commission meeting in Chicopee was scheduled however it was cancelled due to Commissioner scheduling conflicts.

Budget

A total of \$1,500 was dedicated by the DHCD to the Commission. From September through June, all funds were allotted to travel reimbursement for Commission members. However, in June the Commission requested that \$600 of the \$1,500 be allocated for advertising costs. In an effort to better promote the meetings, a legal notice of an upcoming meeting is placed in the leading local newspaper prior to the meeting date. This notice is in addition to the public notice posted on the DHCD website, the notice posted at the meeting place and sent out to the MHC mailing list. The first Commission meeting advertised in a local newspaper was the August meeting in Malden.

Inquiries & Complaints Filed with Commission

Requests for Information

From September 1, 2006, through August 31, 2007, the Coordinator fielded over 90 requests for information related to manufactured homes. Seventeen names were added to the Commission's mailing list. Thirteen park rules and four park sale notices were submitted to the Department of Housing and Community Development. Meetings were well attended with many audience members seeking clarification or an opinion by the Commission on various park issues.

Issues Brought to the Commission

Throughout the year, issues with water and sewers were discussed by the Commission as well as audience members. Specifically, failing septic systems at parks, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) fines/action, water costs, and metering of individual park homes were all explored at several meetings.

House Bill No. 1293 was also the topic of discussion at several Commission meetings. The various items within the proposed bill, including residents receiving a tax credit when replacing oil tanks, water submetering, and rent control and its future, were discussed by Commissioners and audience members.

At the August meeting in Malden, a resident provided a packet of information to the Commission regarding ongoing rent negotiations with the owners of the Town Line Park in Malden. Residents had asked the City of Malden to consider rent control.

Complaints Received by Commission

Lee's Trailer Park – Revere, MA

At the October meeting, the Commission first heard reports of concern regarding the sale of the Lee Trailer Park in Revere without proper notification of the residents. In November, more inquiries were received concerning the Park. It was determined at the November Commission meeting to move the January Commission meeting from the scheduled location of Peabody to Revere. A letter to the DHCD and the Attorney General's Office written by two residents was received in early December detailing their concerns of the rumored sale of the Park where they resided. On December 22, 2006, a formal complaint was logged with the Commission.

On January 9, 2007, the Commission meeting was held at Revere City Hall. Residents of the Park, the attorneys for the current owner and the prospective buyer as well as the prospective himself were all present. Residents spoke about their concerns regarding rent increases, the sale of the Park, their right of first refusal, possible discontinuance of the Park, and the current state of "disrepair" of the Park. Attorneys present promised due diligence with the sale of the Park and repairs. The Commission encouraged all parties to work together for an agreeable resolution. A representative from RCAP Solutions was present at the meeting and offered to work with the residents in exploring their interest in exercising their right of first refusal and possibly purchasing the Park from the current owner. Parties are currently in litigation over the sale of the Park.

Kendall Lane Mobile Home Park – Salisbury, MA

The Commission received a lengthy letter in June from the Kendall Lane Mobile Home Park (Resident) Association including concerns about fees in a recent rent increase request. Because the Commission determined that many issues were unclear based on the letter submitted, a special meeting in Salisbury in July was called and both the residents and the park owner were invited to attend. Both parties attended the meeting. Capital improvement costs vs. owner expenses, sewer line responsibility, and rent control were all discussed and opinions of the Commission were given.

Oakhill Family Park – Attleboro, MA

The Commission also received a complaint in early July from a resident from the Oakhill Family Park. The resident felt his family was being harassed while they were living in his mother's mobile home while she was recovering from a fall. The management wanted the resident and his wife to complete a residency form and submit their social security numbers for a background check. The resident refused and stated they were currently looking for another place to live as his mother was now healthy. While management could not attend the July meeting in Salisbury, the complainant did. The Commission offered their advice on how to best ameliorate the situation while he looked for a new home for his family. Subsequently, after the meeting, the management was notified of the advice given to the resident on how to proceed.

Presentations to the Commission

No outside presenters were formally invited by the Commission to present this past year.

Other Commission Business

In September 2006, the 2007 meeting calendar was set by the Commission. In February, the Commission sent a letter to the newly inaugurated Governor Deval Patrick. The letter welcomed and congratulated the Governor. It further explained the duties and purpose of the Commission.

In an effort to get a current and accurate count of the Manufactured Home Parks in Massachusetts, a survey to be sent to all Massachusetts Boards of Health was drafted and approved by the Commission. The survey requests the number of parks per town, whether each park is contact to town water and/or sewer, and the contact information of each park owner. The results will be compiled and shared with all interested parties.

Commissioners explored the day of the week and time of the Commission meetings as well as the number of Commission meetings held annually. Commissioners were unsure of the reason for the unevenness of audience attendance and considered various options to increase the number in attendance. As mentioned earlier, in an effort to better promote the Commission meetings, it was decided to advertise upcoming Commission meetings in the local town newspaper. Further, the Commission decided in August to decrease the number of meetings held annually from eight to four beginning in calendar year 2008. It was hoped that by holding strategically located meetings just four times a year would increase the likelihood of interested parties attending the meetings. It should be noted that while the Commission has scheduled four meetings for 2008, a Commission meeting may be called at any time to address a pressing issue.

2008 meeting dates and locations were decided as follows:

Tuesday, January 8, 2008 in Peabody

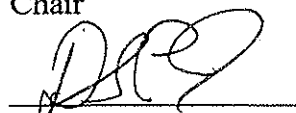
Tuesday, May 20, 2008 in Orange

Thursday, July 17, 2008 in Plymouth

Tuesday, September 16, 2008 in Williamstown



Patricia M. MacDonald
Chair



David G. Piper, Jr.
Recording-Secretary